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after the dependent and delinquent children, to look after recreation, but what about the boy and the girl in the rural community, the boy and girl who are drifting away from home too quickly because they want a good time? There is no place provided for them in the cities. Now if you go back to the rural communities, where you go to work or on your vacation, I wish you might take an interest in the young girls. I believe they need a great deal done for them if we are going to keep them out of the cities and keep them from drifting into prostitution and feeding this great commercialized business, because it is a business largely in the hands of men. They are the ones who are making money out of it. The girls are seeking an opportunity for self-expression which they ought to have given them in their own small community. Persuade people to open the schoolhouses for recreation and spend their money in that way. Is that the nurse's job? I believe it is the nurse's job. I believe it is every woman's job, if we are going to conserve our young womanhood.

## RURAL NURSING: ITS SIGNIFICANCE IN THE SOUTHERN MOUNTAINS<sup>1</sup>

By WARREN P. WILSON, PH.D.

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I want to pay high tribute to the great place the Red Cross occupies at the present time in our national history, because of its very nature. It impresses me as the only society that can bring the people in the little communities in the way of rendering service to the nation, into an organization that will give them a helpful hand in this great work of the world. I am concerned with the people in little communities, and it is my business to tell them to organize in every place, if permitted by this great society, some auxiliary, some small unit, that will enable them to deliver their contribution to our soldiers when they are in the trenches across the seas. I read the other day a pamphlet of this society telling in precise detail what garments or appliances any woman could make to add as her contribution to the help of the nations in this great struggle of the whole world.

Now as to the mountain people of the south, who live on the great backbone of this continent, the great eastern mountain range, they are in the section of the country into which seven of our states, the two Virginias, the two Carolinas, Georgia, Tennessee and Kentucky, reach

<sup>1</sup> Abridged from an address delivered at the twentieth annual convention of the American Nurses' Association, April 30, 1917.

back until they meet. Professor Tait of Virginia, who recently died, a great southerner, himself, says the mountains of the south are the source of the population of the south; the people of the south are constantly reinforced from the populous mountain counties, whence the population has to go out to find a living.

These people are to be studied tonight, not because they are exceptional, but because they are representative of country people. They have indeed an extraordinary share of the country's sufferings and the rural loneliness and the poverty and the struggle of the farmer, but because they have had that excess and have thus accepted it, they are to be considered as representing the country people of the United States. It is because they are marginal people, living where there is not very much of socialized life, that they are the concern of all people who live in the country.

Country people suffer the neglect of the medical profession as it is now organized. A doctor friend of mine has recently discovered that country people are not as healthy as city people; and all of us who talk about the country and know the country have known that always. Clergymen and school teachers long ago discovered the nature of the country, whereas the profession that needs to hear about the country is the medical profession, which has wholly neglected it. A doctor charges twice as much as usual to go to the country for an ordinary treatment, and in many parts of the country he charges four times as much to go to the country for the treatment of a confinement case. People who live in the country are penalized by the medical profession for living there. One of the results is, naturally, that people who live in the country suffer more from certain diseases and certain ills which the medical profession easily remedies for city people. There is a county in the south where a Red Cross nurse is engaged in service at the present time, out in the lonely mountain, where they never hang a man for homicide, but where the record for homicide is the highest of any county in the United States, and the reason they never hang a man for homicide is that there is never a jury drawn that has not on it a man who has killed another. And yet a woman coming as a social worker into that county, or a man as a minister or teacher, has in all the years of my knowledge of the mountains, the last twenty-five years, never been harmed, never been assailed.

Now these mountain people, dwelling by themselves, exemplify, it seems to me, the need of that thing which the Red Cross represents. For what is the Red Cross and what are these national organizations of nurses? Has not the time come or is it not coming when the service of the physician and the nurse will be national and not personal, when

the doctor will work for a salary by the nation and not for a fee by the patient? Is the time far off, and does not this war bring it a decade nearer, when the physician will come on the call of need and not on the call of the fee? I believe that is what these great organizations meeting here tonight mean in the history of America, they are an earnest and sign of the time coming when the physician and nurse, as the school-teacher, will be employed by the nation and by the state. The people today realize that if the farmer does not feed them they will starve, and they will realize it more in the next two or three years. Speaking for the farmer it is fair to say that unless medicine and the nursing profession can organize on that basis, the farmer will never have a doctor of his own. One-half the population of the United States today is concerned with farming, but for country people medical service in the family and nursing will be adequately given only when national agencies or national governments provide the doctor and the nurse.

This has been exemplified in very recent years, in our discovery of hookworm disease, which is peculiarly social. It is not difficult to cure, its symptoms are plain and evident, but it is a disease so dire, so blighting upon the individual, so degrading to the community, so impoverishing to the whole family, that it is a social calamity. Whole counties in the south, particularly these mountain counties, have suffered from this disease, so simple and so easy of cure or of prevention that the knowledge of it came in a very short time to the medical profession, and they went, under the leadership of the Rockefeller Foundation, through all those counties. That first campaign has been ended, and it may be fair to say that society has taken hold of the problem of preventing and healing this one disease. Now when sickness comes to be a social ill, and the state is impoverished by it, the state rises to heal it; and the sicknesses of the mountain country are social ills very largely. If we are to realize in the next three years that the farmer must feed us or we will starve, then we will send into the country, by some such agency as this, physicians and nurses. The citizens of the commonwealth have enough who will heal the ills of the country and who will work for the whole people as the soldier works.

In the mountain country for a number of years we had public libraries and we put stereopticon pictures on the wall. We showed the people that they ought to screen their houses. We showed them that they ought to provide sewage disposal facilities. We showed them that they ought to protect themselves against the fly, against the mosquito, and we showed the means of doing it. They would stay till midnight to see the pictures, and then go home and do nothing. We

found they were interested in every kind of demonstration, every sort of picture and lecture, but when we put a woman to work among them, to go and visit the scene, and when she said, "Screen this place, drain that ditch, clean up this filth," they did it. She came there to heal the sick when they were ill; she had an authority they never before had discovered. The residence of the nurse among the people was a demonstration and an appeal to the best intelligence, and the best intelligence is represented in the mountains. There needed to be some one to stay by the bed of illness, stay through the night and in the morning speak, and then they obeyed, and not until then. A woman in the mountains must demonstrate and must teach what health means. She must explain to individuals, she must plead the cause of better living, of hygiene; she must also teach classes in hygiene and dietetics, and especially first aid; for many parts of the mountain country are being timbered off and there are many accidents. Country living is always perilous, farmers suffer more than men of any other occupation, from physical injuries.

Then school children must be inspected. It must be made plain that defective hearing and vision and deformities in children can often be remedied and the child restored to society and enabled to go ahead in his class, who before was retarded.

The mountain country presents ills, pneumonia in the winter, intestinal disorders in the summer and in the fall, from ignorance of dietetics. These are the chief ills. In some parts of the mountains, typhoid and tuberculosis are practically unknown. These things are not beyond remedy, they are within control.

The care of women in childbirth, prenatal advice and the care during confinement are of profoundest importance. Many of these sections where women go to work are scores of miles from a physician.

It is in conditions such as these that the work of the mountains is often done. It is where the white race and the Anglo-Saxon of the purest stock face the chasm and the abyss, where the atmosphere of immorality is ever put before the young, who are scarcely ever in church, who know nothing of science, who farm by the moon, so far as they farm at all, and disgrace the splendid traditions of the fighting man of the mountains and our people.

The nurse's duties include the work of the nursing and care of little children through the days of their early growth. One of them wrote me recently about little Magnolia Annie, two years of age, who had been brought in from off the border, just breathing, a mere skeleton. The mother told her the story of how the child was near death; Miss Rich took hold of the child, insisting that the mother must do pre-

cisely what she said, and learned that the grandmother had come the day before, hearing the child was ill, and the first thing she did, remembering that the child liked chicken, was to broil a whole chicken and set it before the almost expiring child. By the utmost care and the daily visits of two nurses, the child was brought back to health and strength.

I want to say if there is any woman who wants to serve her country, I invite her this night to consider the southern mountains. She will not be paid much; she will go into a land where the romance carries her over the hardships. She must not go if she is afraid to be alone; she must not go if she cannot learn to ride a horse; she must not go if she is afraid to have her horse, when she is leading him down a narrow trail, pitch headlong down the mountain side.

Now I want to say to you that if you do go, you will never want to leave the mountains. There is something about the hardships and the romance of that country that wins the heart of man and woman.

We are facing today a new experience. We are a fit people, a rich people, a free people, and God has given us much; we know a little but we are learning a great lesson and part of it we are going to learn in this great school.

It seems to me the Red Cross has a great part in the assembling and volunteering of the many out of this new world of women who are entering into a place in the state service; this great army of women who, until now, never knew that they had a vast independent service to render. The Red Cross shows them the great opportunity to give their part to the state and the world, and may God grant that some of you may find a place to fill your heart in the southern mountains.

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The Colorado State Board of Nurse Examiners will hold an examination to examine applicants, according to the law, in September, at the State House, Denver. Apply to Louise Perrin, R.N., State House, Denver, Colorado.